



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
*1102 SE Quince Street • PO Box 47990*  
*Olympia, Washington 98504-7990*

February 11, 2002

The Honorable Lisa Brown, Chair  
Senate Ways & Means Committee  
300 John A. Cherberg Building  
Olympia, WA 98504-0482

Dear Senator Brown:

Substitute Senate Bill 6356, concerning children's environmental health, is scheduled to be heard by your committee this afternoon. We are writing as chairs of the Washington State Board of Health committees on Environmental Health and Children's Health and Well-Being to reiterate our support for the bill's concept and to respectfully raise concerns about changes in the substitute version.

We believe there is important work to be done in the area of children's environmental health and the creation of the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council has potential to improve the health and safety of Washington's children.

We support some changes made to the bill in committee. Moving the reporting deadline back one year is more realistic. We also support the expanded committee membership, though we feel that it may be unrealistic to ask members who are not state employees (i.e., the toxicologist, the parent, the tribal representative, and the pediatrician) to serve without compensation other than reimbursement for travel.

We are pleased to see the Board mentioned in the bill and do believe it would be appropriate for the Board, which is mandated to recommend health policy for the state, to staff the committee. The goals of the Children's Environmental Health and Protection Advisory Council clearly overlap with the Board's past and present priority work areas: children's health and well-being, environmental health, environmental justice, and health disparities.

We are very concerned, however, about the funding mechanism for the bill. The draft Department of Health fiscal note for SB 6356 was more than \$66,000 per year for staffing, travel, and related costs. Adjusting the reporting date may remove some costs. Nonetheless, soliciting funds and staffing this advisory group still could require a commitment of as much as 10 percent of the State Board of Health's annual budget. If you adopt the governor's budget, the Board will have taken a cut this biennium of close to 20 percent without any reduction in mandated activities. SSB 6356 would permit the Board to solicit and spend public and private funds to support this effort. If given this assignment, the Board would make every reasonable effort to raise external funds. There is,

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however, no guarantee of success. If the Board were to fail, it would still have a statutory obligation to undertake a major new area of work, with no new funding, in the face to repeated and substantial budget cuts.

We would suggest two amendments to SSB 6356:

1. Amend section 5, beginning on line 15, to allow the Board to solicit and expend private funds for all its activities and not restrict that ability to this advisory council. Such language would be consistent with legislation passed last year allowing the Department of Health to solicit and spend grants and contributions.
2. Add a clause that makes the legislation null and void if the Board, after making a reasonable effort, fails to secure a commitment of adequate outside funding by December 1, 2002.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carl Osaki, R.S., M.S.P.H.  
Chair, Environmental Health Committee

Vickie Ybarra, R.N., M.P.H.  
Chair, Children's Health and Well-Being  
Committee

cc: Senator Rosa Franklin  
Senate Ways & Means Committee Members  
Ms. Ree Sailors, Governor's Office of Health Policy  
Mr. Bill White, Department of Health  
Ms. Patty Hayes, Department of Health  
Washington State Board of Health Members  
Don Sloma, State Board of Health